

Application No.: 10/767,743

Docket No.: 713-1009

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-7. (canceled)

8. (currently amended) A grommet adapted to be inserted into an opening of a sheet member having opposite upper and lower surfaces, said grommet comprising:

a shank extending in an axial direction of said grommet and having opposite upper and lower ends;

at least a locking tab coupled to said shank between the upper and lower ends of said shank and radially flexible relative to said shank; and

a head connected to the upper end of said shank and comprising a flange adapted to engage the upper surface of the sheet member when said shank and said locking tab are snapped into the opening;

wherein said shank comprises

a shoulder in a region adjacent the head, said shoulder being adapted to be placed below an edge of the opening when said shank is moved transversely to said axial direction after being snapped into the opening, thereby preventing withdrawal of said shank from said opening; and

an outer surface section inclined relative to the axial direction and connecting said shoulder and the lower surface of said head, for engaging the edge of the opening and drawing said shank into the opening when said shank is moved transversely to said axial direction; and

~~The grommet of claim 6,~~ wherein said locking tab has a lower end directly connected to said shank and an upper end free of any direct attachment with said shank.

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9. (canceled)

10. (previously presented) The grommet of claim 8, wherein the region of said shank with said shoulder is less radially flexible than said locking tab.

11-13. (canceled)

14. (currently amended) A grommet adapted to be inserted into an opening of a sheet member having opposite upper and lower surfaces, said grommet comprising:

a shank extending in an axial direction of said grommet and having opposite upper and lower ends;

at least a locking tab coupled to said shank between the upper and lower ends of said shank and radially flexible relative to said shank; and

a head connected to the upper end of said shank and comprising a flange adapted to engage the upper surface of the sheet member when said shank and said locking tab are snapped into the opening;

wherein said shank comprises

a shoulder in a region adjacent the head, said shoulder being adapted to be placed below an edge of the opening when said shank is moved transversely to said axial direction after being snapped into the opening, thereby preventing withdrawal of said shank from said opening; and

an outer surface section inclined relative to the axial direction and connecting said shoulder and the lower surface of said head, for engaging the edge of the opening and drawing said shank into the opening when said shank is moved transversely to said axial direction; and

~~The grommet of claim 6,~~ wherein said shank has an approximately rectangular cross section in the region adjacent to said head, and comprises said shoulder and said outer surface section in a corner portion of the approximately rectangular cross section.

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15. (previously presented) The grommet of claim 14, wherein said locking tab is positioned in a middle of a side of the approximately rectangular cross section.

16. (previously presented) The grommet of claim 14, wherein said shank comprises at least two said shoulders and two said outer surface sections being located in two diagonally opposite corner portions of said shank, thereby allowing said shank to be rotatable within the opening about an axis of said grommet.

17. (previously presented) The grommet of claim 16, wherein each of said shoulders has an approximately triangular shape having a side that is not parallel with any side of the approximately rectangular cross section of said shank.

18-20. (canceled)

21. (previously presented) A grommet adapted to be inserted into an opening of a sheet member having opposite upper and lower surfaces, said grommet comprising:

a shank extending in an axial direction of said grommet and having opposite upper and lower ends;

a head connected to the upper end of said shank and comprising a flange adapted to engage the upper surface of the sheet member when said shank is inserted into the opening;

wherein said shank comprises

a shoulder in a region adjacent the head, said shoulder being adapted to be placed below an edge of the opening when said shank is moved transversely to said axial direction after being inserted into the opening, thereby preventing withdrawal of said shank from said opening; and

an inclined outer surface section connecting said shoulder and the lower surface of said head, for engaging the edge of the opening and drawing said shank into the opening when said shank is moved transversely to said axial direction, wherein said inclined outer surface section

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extends continuously, radially inwardly and upwardly from said shoulder to the lower surface of said head.

22. (previously presented) The grommet of claim 21, further comprising a plurality of flexible locking tabs coupled to said shank between the upper and lower ends of said shank for preventing withdrawal of said grommet from the opening after said shank and said locking tabs are snapped into the opening, wherein said outer surface section is closer to said head than an uppermost part of said flexible locking tabs.

23. (previously presented) In combination,
a sheet member having opposite upper and lower surfaces and an opening connecting the upper and lower surface; and

a grommet plugged in said opening, said grommet comprising:

a shank extending in an axial direction of said opening and having opposite upper and lower ends; and

a head connected to the upper end of said shank and comprising a flange engaging the upper surface of said sheet member;

wherein said shank comprises

a shoulder in a region adjacent the head, said shoulder being located below an edge of said opening by rotating said shank an angle about an axis of said opening after inserting said shank into said opening, thereby preventing withdrawal of said shank from said opening; and

an inclined outer surface section connecting said shoulder and the lower surface of said head, said inclined outer surface section engaging the edge of the opening and drawing said shank into said opening upon rotation of said shank, wherein said outer surface section extends continuously, radially inwardly and upwardly from said shoulder to the lower surface of said head.

24. (previously presented) In the combination of claim 23, said grommet further

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comprising at least a locking tab coupled to said shank between the upper and lower ends of said shank and radially flexible relative to said shank, said locking tab being located below the lower surface of said sheet member without engaging the lower surface.

25. (previously presented) In the combination of claim 23, wherein the region of said shank with said shoulder has a cross section allowing said region to pass through said opening without being deformed.